

perature to a blazing inferno. There is a feeling of great urgency in its opening bars of rapid-fire single notes. Sustained throughout the entire movement, the tempo becomes a virtual *moto perpetuo*.

About *The Birth of Shiva for Solo Piano*, Dan Welcher writes: "This ten-minute work is a distillation of the first movement (*Time*) of my 1994 piano concerto, which has the subtitle *Shiva's Drum*. All the materials, and even the basic order of events, follow the progression of the orchestral version, but the piano soloist must here provide percussion, the semblance of strings, and woodwind textures, in addition to what was already a formidable solo part. The Hindu god Shiva, who was the protagonist in the concerto, is revealed in this new work to be an entire universe. Since Shiva is both creator and destroyer, and since this piece could not attempt to replicate a concerto that lasts more than thirty minutes, I decided to feature him solely in his "creator" role. In the ten minutes of *The Birth of Shiva*, we can observe his birth, his growth, and his creative power.

The piece proceeds from a 'lightning bolt' opening, in which the cosmos is instantly created. The pulsating music that follows it supports a sequence of canenzalike passages, in which the deity is seen gathering and organizing matter, creating, as it were, the world. The music is strong, but unfocused at first, as if the newly made matter has not yet found its form. As it proceeds, the materials become more and more cohesive and metered. Midway through the piece, a very lyric theme emerges: Shiva, the Creator. At once tender and gentle, it is also self-assured and confident. A slow middle section, (resting music to follow the creative energy?), is meditative and serene. At length, it leads back to the lightning bolt figure, and the Creator theme reappears, resplendent in new colors. The piece concludes with the happy pulsing of new-created time. *The Birth of Shiva* was written for the same excellent musician who commissioned the concerto, James Dick."

In the *Polonaise No. 5 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44*, Chopin moved from the ABA form that characterized his etudes and his earlier polonaises to something more like a fantasia. The old form was not suitable for this new mode of expression, so he came up with a new expanded form, the *grande polonaise*. The *Polonaise in F Sharp Minor* is seldom played, perhaps because of its incredible difficulty, which demands enormous strength from the performer. It is martial and impassioned. There are dashing double octaves, expressing an immediate urgency, that bring forth the puissant rhythm of the polonaise. Following this emotional upheaval, a serene mazurka appears. The contentment is not to last, however. At its conclusion, the "storm and stress" of the first section return and the heat of the emotions is once again inflamed. As if this were not enough, the movement has a coda that jettisons to a climax, fizzles out, and ends with a startling clap of thunder.

-Program notes by Elmer Booze

*The Fifty-eighth Season of*

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



*2321st Concert*

**JAMES DICK, pianist**

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Sunday Evening, 31 October 1999  
Seven O'clock  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

## PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770–1827)

Bagatelles, Op. 126  
(1823–1824)

Andante con moto  
Allegro  
Andante  
Presto  
Quasi allegretto  
Presto

Sonata No. 23 in F Minor (“Appassionata”)  
Op. 22 (1833-1838)

Allegro assai  
Andante con moto  
Allegro ma non troppo

## INTERMISSION

Dan Welcher  
(b. 1948)

”The Birth of Shiva” Fantasy  
(1999)

*World Premiere Performance*

Frederic Chopin  
(1810–1849)

Polonaise No. 5 in F-sharp Minor  
Op. 44 (1841)

Recognized as one of the truly important pianists of his generation, pianist **James Dick** brings keyboard sonorities of captivating opulence and brilliance to performances that radiate intellectual insight and emotional authenticity. Dick’s early triumphs as a major prizewinner in the Tchaikovsky, Busoni, and Leventritt International Competitions were a mere prelude to an eminent career. In addition to enthusiastically received recitals in the Kennedy Center and at the National Gallery (1996), Dick has undertaken annual recitals and concerto performances in the world’s premier concert halls, including New York’s Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Town Hall, and 92<sup>nd</sup> Street “Y”. In Europe, he has been heard in London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, and Purcell Room, and Paris’ Theatre du Chatelet and Salle Gaveau. Dick was elected an Honorary Associate of London’s Royal Academy of Music; recently, he received the signal honor of being named a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* by the French minister of culture. James Dick appears at the Gallery by arrangement with Alain G. Declert & Associates, of Round Top, Texas.

Beethoven’s three sets of *Bagatelles*, which he called *Kleinigkeiten* (trifles or frivolities), were written at various times: *Op. 33* in 1801–1802, *Op. 119* in 1820–1821, and *Op. 126* in 1823. Although each piece in *Op. 126* is relatively brief and without profundity, the six pieces making up this set “strike one as having absorbed [Beethoven’s] whole creative faculty” (Eric Blom). Beethoven’s mood swings are notorious. It is not difficult to surmise that these musical epigrams are his “diary” entries, personal and more revealing of his character than anything he composed before or after them. As the noted Austrian pianist Alfred Brendel remarked, “One should never forget that Beethoven played them himself and probably did so with the art that conceals art. If one treats them as trifles, trifles they remain. If one plays them for all they are worth, they are a true delight.”

At its completion, the *Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57* (“*Appassionata*”) was considered by Beethoven to be his greatest creation in this genre. The Hamburg publisher Crazz supplied the title. The sonata could not have been more aptly named, given the ardor found in each movement. In addition, the technical and musical demands required of the performer are stupendous. The first movement (*Allegro assai*) is awesomely quick and acerbic, which gives the music its incredible driving force and energy. The second movement (*Andante con moto*), using a simple tune, is constructed over a set of variations. While the setting gives the aura of serenity, its layout is a smoke screen, for under closer examination, the movement’s effect is like that of singing and praying over banked fire. The finale (*Allegro, ma non troppo*) raises the tem-